

51st ANNIVERSARY

EARTH DAY

CLEAN-UP

SATURDAY, APRIL 24, 2021

Bags, Vests, Pickers & Gloves provided!

 Please join in to help clean up our community!

 Cady Field behind PV Town Hall

 Registration starts @ 8:30 (Rain date 5/1/21) *at*

 Clean-up from 9am to Noon

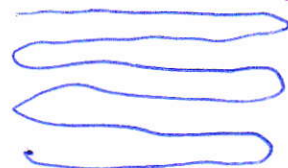
 Composting demonstration at Noon

 Plastics Display from 11:00AM till 1:00PM

 Climate Smart Communities Informational

Booths will be available

For more information please contact MAlbrecht@pleasantvalley-ny.gov



2021



United States Congress

BREAK FREE FROM PLASTIC POLLUTION ACT

Introduced by Senator Merkley and Representative Lowenthal

Plastic pollution is a crisis threatening our public health, our climate, our economy, and our planet. Plastic production and waste is fueling climate change and poisoning our bodies through the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the food we eat. And unless we act, things are only going to get worse. **The Break Free From Plastic Pollution Act**, from U.S. Senator Jeff Merkley (D-OR) and U.S. Representative Alan Lowenthal (D-CA) is the national strategy we need to address this growing crisis.

Plastic pollution has exploded into a global crisis that threatens our public health, economic security, and the future of our planet.

- Studies suggest that humans swallow a credit card's worth of plastic every week. Exposure to plastic toxins has been linked to cancers, birth defects, and other ailments.
- The United States disposes or incinerates 32 million tons of plastic waste each year, burdening our local government budgets and overwhelming systems to handle it.
- Our recycling system is broken: just 8% of plastic waste in the United States is sorted for recycling, and less than 3% of plastic waste is recycled into a similar quality product.
- Global plastic production will triple by 2050, accounting for 20% of global oil consumption and emissions linked to plastic will reach 1.3 billion tons by 2030, equal to 300 coal-fired power plants.
- Emissions from plastic production and waste management facilities are disproportionately impacting low-income and minority communities, perpetuating the harm of historic environmental injustices.

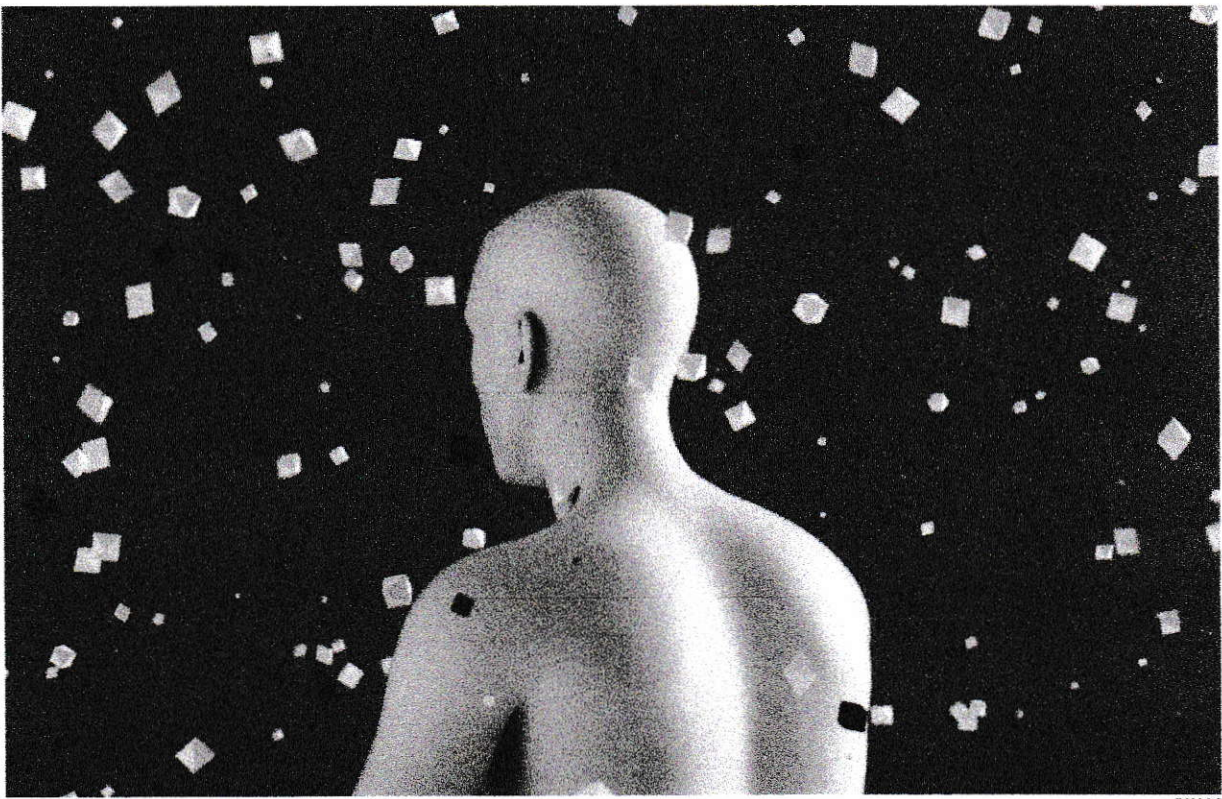
Americans are fed up with the plastic pollution crisis and broadly support many steps to tackle the plastic pollution crisis. Recent polling shows that two-thirds of Americans believe that businesses that produce or use plastics in their products should pay for collecting, sorting, and recycling plastics.

The Break Free from Plastic Pollution Act will provide national leadership to reduce the amount of wasteful plastic produced and reforming our broken waste and recycling systems. The bill will shift the burden of cleanup and waste management to where it belongs: on the corporations that produce this waste, by –

- Requiring big corporations take responsibility for their pollution, requiring producers of plastic products to design, manage, and finance waste and recycling programs.
- Spurring innovation, incentivizing big corporations to make reusable products and items that can actually be recycled.
- Creating a nationwide beverage container refund program, which is successful at the state level.
- Reducing and ban certain single-use plastic products that are not recyclable.
- Establishing minimum recycled content requirements for beverage containers, packaging, and food-service products.
- Generating massive investments in domestic recycling and composting infrastructure, while pressing pause on new plastic facilities until critical environment and health protections are put in place.

Together we can tackle plastic pollution with the bold action – but we must act now, before it's too late.

From "Beyond Plastic" website



ZOLLOC

New York Times 06-26-2020

We're All Inhaling Microplastics

Janice Brahney

WE WEREN'T looking for what we found.

LOGAN, UTAH
My research group was trying to determine how much phosphorous was being carried by wind and rain into some of the most remote regions of the West and how this nutrient might affect lakes and streams. To do so, we sampled dust in 11 scattered locations, from Joshua Tree National Park in California to the Wind River Range in Wyoming.

Back at the lab, peering through microscopes at our samples, we could see pollen, insect parts and bits of minerals — all of which would have made it just another day in the life of a dust scientist. But what made it different was an unexpected interloper: tiny bits of plastic, most from synthetic microfibers used for making clothing. They were in all of our samples. And lots of them.

There was so much microplastic, we calculated that up to 6 percent of the dusts in those far-flung locations are microplastics and that more than 1,000 metric tons are deposited in those places every year by wind and rain. Some blew in from nearby cities, but most came from much farther away and represented decades of plastic waste. Four colleagues and I recently published our findings in the journal *Science*.

This waste has become so ubiquitous that it's now in the air we breathe. Airborne microplastics don't care what ZIP code you live in. Preventing a landfill in your community won't limit your exposure. And there are still many questions. If dust in the Grand Canyon contains mi-

croplastics, how many of these tiny plastic particles are in city dust? How high will airborne concentrations of microplastics get? What effect are they having on the environment? Are microplastics more toxic than other, better-understood sources of air pollution such as natural and industrial dusts?

We know that inhaled plastics can produce inflammation and lesions in lungs, and repeated exposure is suspected of leading to respiratory problems like asthma and cancer. Inhaling microplastics may also increase exposure to other toxic substances and coatings associated

We found these tiny particles in dust in the most remote places.

with plastics and their manufacture.

Natural dust, which include dusts generated by humans, and industrial dusts can also contain dangerous components, like the pathogen *Coccidioides*, a soil-borne fungus that causes valley fever, which can produce flu-like symptoms. Industrial, urban and agricultural dusts often contain heavy metals as well as synthetic toxins. Outdoor air pollution causes roughly seven million premature deaths a year and is associated with pulmonary diseases, even when adjusted for underlying risk factors. Those statistics most likely include some of the effects of plastic. That we can breathe in microplastics has been known for decades. We just haven't fully appreciated the scale of the problem.

But as Steve Allen, who does research on microplastics at the University of

Strathclyde in Glasgow, Scotland, put it recently to *The Washington Post*, "It is hard to imagine a sentence starting with: 'The health benefits of breathing airborne microplastic. . . .'"

We shouldn't be surprised by these findings. In 2018, about 359 million metric tons of plastics were produced worldwide. Plastics are useful, of course, and we need them for medicine, food safety and technology. But do we really need plastic lawn decorations for every holiday? The plastic pollution crisis seems to have as much to do with industry as it does with consumer choices. A 2017 study in the journal *Science Advances* estimated that "if current production and waste management trends continue, roughly 12 billion metric tons of plastic waste will be in landfills or in the natural environment by 2050."

Movements against plastics pollution have led to bans on plastic straws and plastic bags, and microbeads in cosmetics. But airborne microplastics mostly come from clothing, car tires and the fragmentation of commodities and packaging used briefly and then thrown away, sometimes decades ago.

Reducing plastic waste means taking aim at consumer comfort and convenience, and offering sustainable alternatives to plastics for those on all rungs of the economic ladder.

The path forward to cleaning up this problem is not clear but undoubtedly will require sweeping and uncomfortable changes. Taking on this issue requires understanding it, and as our findings underscore, one thing is clear: We're breathing in microplastics. That can't be good. □

JANICE BRAHNEY is an assistant professor of watershed sciences at Utah State University.